

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 26, 2009

The Honorable David Obey  
Chairman  
House Committee on Appropriations  
H-218 Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jerry Lewis  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Appropriations  
1016 Longworth HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Olver  
Chairman  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Transportation, HUD, and Related Agencies  
2358A Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Latham  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Transportation, HUD, and Related Agencies  
1016 Longworth HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Chairmen Obey and Olver and Ranking Members Lewis and Latham:

In recent years Americans have been flocking to public transit at rates not seen in half a century in the United States. Transit use is up 32 percent since 1995 and Americans took more than 10.7 billion trips on public transportation in 2008 – the highest level in 52 years and a modern ridership record. But at the same time transit agencies are trying to handle record ridership, they are facing dwindling local and state resources and last summer they saw record diesel prices. Rising costs are contributing to transit service cuts and delays in service improvements. These increases in operating costs, coupled with increases in ridership, signal an impending crisis for public transit in America.

As you know, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) recently allocated \$8.4 billion to public transportation agencies in an effort to improve and expand transit networks. This piece of the ARRA package was an important step toward expanding public transportation in the U.S., yet it fell decidedly short of addressing all the issues these systems are facing. Current law prohibits municipalities with populations larger than 200,000 from using Federal transit formula funds for operating expenses, an area in which financial support is sorely needed. As ARRA transit funds are being pumped into the capital costs of public transit systems, these very same systems are struggling to cover their operating costs.

A comprehensive public transit system needs to reach as many potential riders as possible as well as deliver reliable service. In order to maintain consistent and reliable service for riders, access to operations assistance in these tough economic times is crucial. The Senate FY 2009 Supplemental Appropriations Act contains language to allow transit agencies to use up to 10 percent of their transit formula funding from ARRA on operating expenses at no additional cost to the taxpayer. With the availability of these operating funds transit agencies will be able to retain public transit employees and prevent cuts in service.

During conference negotiations on the FY 2009 Supplemental Appropriations Act we strongly encourage you to accept the Senate language to allow our public transportation agencies to use up to 10 percent of their ARRA Federal transit formula funds for operating costs.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,



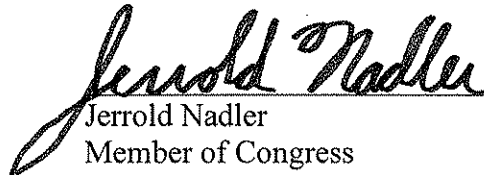
Peter A. DeFazio  
Member of Congress



John Lewis  
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress




Bob Filner  
Member of Congress



Eddie Bernice Johnson  
Member of Congress



Elijah Cummings  
Member of Congress



Michael Capuano  
Member of Congress



Michael Michaud  
Member of Congress



Russ Carnahan  
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Grace Napolitano  
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Daniel Lipinski  
Member of Congress



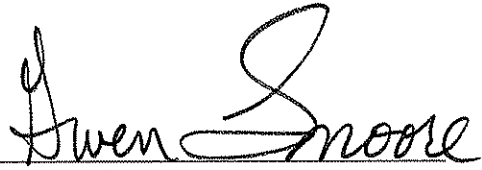
John Hall  
Member of Congress



Albio Sires  
Member of Congress



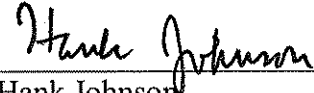
Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress



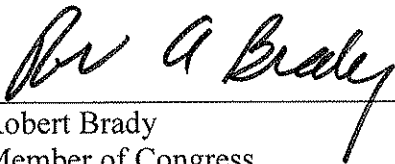
Gwen Moore  
Member of Congress



Jim McDermott  
Member of Congress



Hank Johnson  
Member of Congress



Robert Brady  
Member of Congress



Debbie Halvorson  
Member of Congress



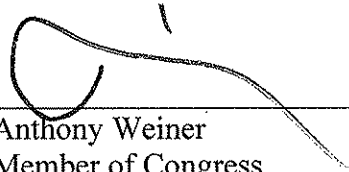
Betty McCollum  
Member of Congress



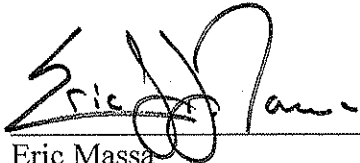
Maxine Waters  
Member of Congress



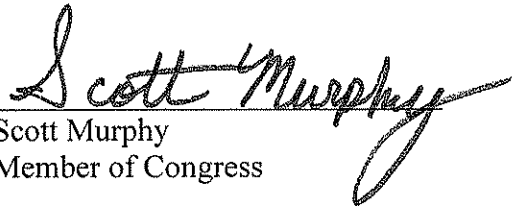
Chellie Pingree  
Member of Congress



Anthony Weiner  
Member of Congress



Eric Massa  
Member of Congress



Scott Murphy  
Member of Congress



Betty Sutton  
Member of Congress

CC: Speaker Pelosi